Films from (415)

NEW CINEMA ART FROM SAN FRANCISCO

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This brochure represents a cooperative effort of a number of individuals working in the Bay Area who feel a certain sympathy for each other's work. They also share the notion that interested audiences for their films exist in many other communities, but that many of these potential viewers are unaware of new work being done in cinema. It is in this spirit of disseminating contemporary film work to a geographically varied audience that this collection is offered for exhibition to museums, film showcases, college film societies, and cinema studies classes.

In general, these seven filmmakers, Abigail Child, David Gerstein, Henry Hills, Janis Crystal Lipzin, Mark McGowan, Caroline Savage-Lee, and Joel Singer, come to the art form of film from divergent backgrounds and experiences; but their works all display a symptotic relation to issues, procedures, and investigations common to other art forms. While many independent films today carry the descriptor "experimental", *Films From 415* are experimental in **concept** not merely in technical innovation or image formation. Although they employ the film medium's illusionistic magic, the works themselves are intentional reflections of the complex of machinery and two-dimensional light-sensitive materials which comprise the physical bases for the works. Each film tends to be an independently existing world which is given life for the moment of projection apart from a "normal" order of real time and space.

Films From 415 are components of the growing edge of a vibrant art form. This collection is offered as one introduction to the challenges and delights of a new generation of San Francisco cinema art.

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Janis Crystal Lipzin

JANIS CRYSTAL LIPZIN

THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF M. VALDEMAR (11.83 MIN. VERSION) color, sound, 12 min.

Scientists always have called upon their imaginations to make sense of their experimental observations. And shortly before the French Revolution, science was not free of its fictions. Franz Anton Mesmer was then attempting serious explanations of the wonderful forces of nature by suggesting that some impalpable, invisible fluid carried electricity, magnetism, and light. His psuedo-scientific system for bringing the world into focus—*mesmerism*—forms the central motif of the Edgar Allen Poe short story from which this film derives its title. Two strains dominate the film "...*Valdemar...*": one celebrates a delight in the mesmeric state induced by the random repetitive movements of a mechanical toy car with its flickering colored light and the second traces recollections of the humorous process of shooting the film. Oscillations between these two elements underscore the play between illusions of physical reality and consciousness-altering. "...*Valdemar...*" is an entire 400-foot camera roll with synchronous sound. Received Honorable Mention at 1976 Bellevue Film Festival; selected for exhibition in *100 Years of Experimental Film-Experimental Filmmakers USA* at the Cinematheque Francaise, Beauborg, Paris.

HENRY HILLS

PORTER SPRINGS 2, color, silent, 9 min.

Porter Springs 2 is the second installment in an on-going series of sketches, shot in summertime in a particular portion of North Georgia and later assembled with adorational yet rigorous care. The series itself functions as a record of the filmmaker's development; the locale as a clear center for an often confused psyche, a source of renewal of humane and earthy values trampled upon or flung aside in encounters with the city. *Part 2* contrasts natural motion (young girls running) with (spatially exploratory) motion created on the cutting table (2 boathouses) and through single frame photography.



from "Scratch Off/In"

MARK MCGOWAN

SCRATCH OFF/IN, b/w,sound, 13.5 min.

"Mark McGowan's **Scratch Off/In** uses simple action - scratching - to express, intricately and subtly, the relationship between illusion and reality. The metaphor of this uncut film is created through the interaction of mirrors which allow the viewer (and the artist) to first perceive McGowan as a fixed and solid object that eventually becomes blurred and finally transcends traditional boundaries. Through the scratching action that is reflected in an ingenious arrangement of mirrors, McGowan succeeds in expressing his notion of the false reality of self as an object fixed in time and space. He *scratches* on a tightly constructed film documenting a new, mysterious and complex view of self and of reality, for the audience to consider."

-- Linda Dackman
Artweek

ABIGAIL CHILD

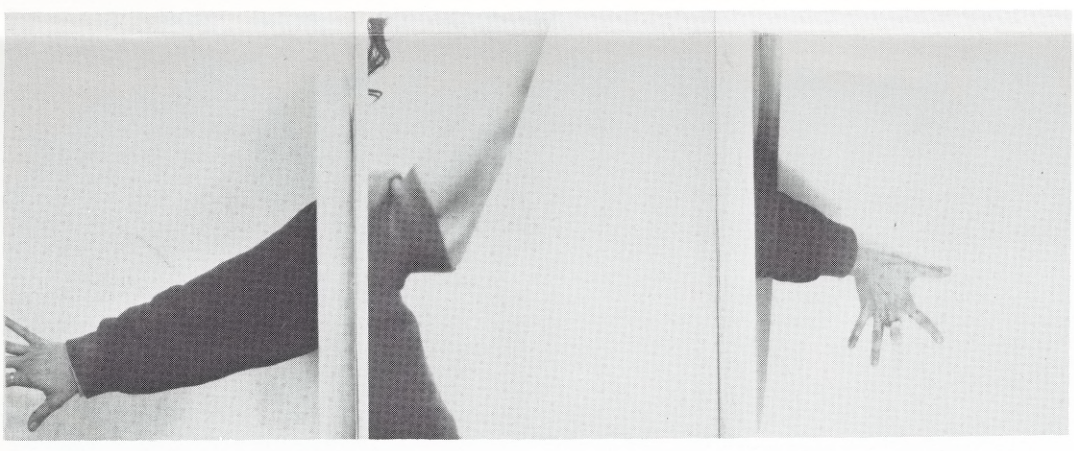
SOME EXTERIOR PRESENCE, color,silent, 8.5 min.

Some Exterior Presence is constructed of outtakes from a WNBC documentary which I was directing in the Spring of 1976 on radical nuns in the Brownsville, Brooklyn section of New York City.

Frustrated by conventional documentary techniques, I chose four scenes which appealed to me for their graphic and kinetic qualities and reconstructed them in formal cinematic terms. I worked out the 'four-handed' fact of film: its ability to go forwards and backwards, right side and flipped.

Hence: a fourth part; a ¼ of a day; four-cornered; midway between the points of conjunction and opposition; a card game played by four persons; a square dance of French origin; an order of mammals; to multiply by four; to intersect

cross adoring; cross bearing; cross fixed; cross bun
cross bones; cross current; cross cut; cross armed;
cross under; cross reference; cross beam; cross bench
cross bred; cross examine; cross eye; cross legged;
cross light; cross road; cross over; cross stitch;
cross wise; cross word; criss cross

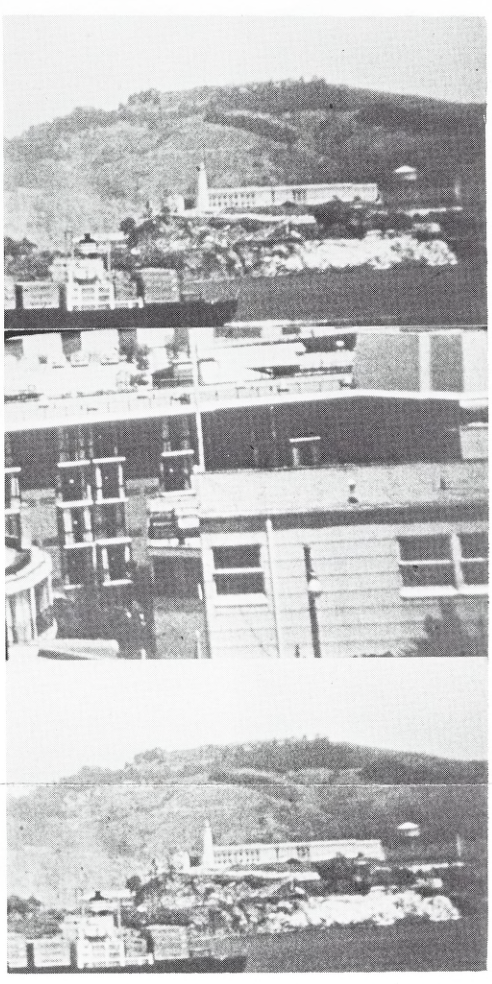


Abigail Child

DAVID GERSTEIN

ALTERNATIONS OF PERSPECTIVE, color, sound, 21 min.

My interests in film center on exploring ways in which film functions, both mechanically and perceptually. I attempt to demonstrate in my films different aspects of this functioning, and then attempt to direct that recognition to a specific cinematic experience. In *Alternations of Perspective,* the functions I explore are the individual frame, the illusion of depth and perspective resulting from standard lenses, and the illusion of superimposition resulting from two alternating images. On the sound track I am exploring a disruption of sound similar to the disruptions seen on the picture roll. These strategies hopefully lead the viewer to question such things as continuous motion, spatial and temporal illusion, and sound-picture correspond-ences, and provide alternative modes of experiencing film.



from "Alternations of Perspective"



Joel Singer

JOEL SINGER

GLYPHS II, color, silent, 10 min.

'In water and air and light, in tree and shadow, Singer's camera eye, as if licked by a serpent's tongue, reads and understands the language of light, discovering new motions and gleams that our eyes could never witness. These films are not merely displays of technical ease but are the performance of an elaborate mating dance between the instrument of the camera and the varied tides of nature. The animating powers of the camera are unloosened upon the dead eyes. In all of his films an animating, enlightening spirit transmutes the eye into a crystal elixir. In the camera's dark retort, from the black cave and womb behind the shutter, life is relighted.'

--Robert Lipman

CAROLINE SAVAGE-LEE

VOYEUR, color, silent, 7.5 min.

Voyeur examines the tension between a procedural and an intuitive approach to structuring filmic experience. Once the procedure is established, that is, the filming through a window of a windowshade moving in the wind, it is interrupted by the insertion of similar point of view shots that are contrasted in color, motion and perspective. A tension is maintained in the thwarted expectation of a fixed-focus, single activity experience through unexpected bursts of window imagery.



Caroline Savage-Lee by Janis Crystal Lipzin

Yes, we'd like to rent "FILMS FROM (415)".

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JANIS CRYSTAL LIPZIN

b. November 19, 1945 to Sylvia Cristal, music teacher, and Marvin Lipzin, photographer, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Raised in Western New York state, appearing weekly on T.V. show, *Fun To Learn About Art*, 1953; made first 8mm film in 1961. Lived in New York City, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and rural Western Pennsylvania and Southern Ohio. *Education:* New York University; University of Buffalo; Ohio University (BFA 1967); University of Pittsburgh (MLS 1972); Pittsburgh Filmmakers Workshop (1974); San Francisco Art Institute (MFA 1976). *Participant Exhibitions:* Albright-Knox Art Gallery; Collective for Living Cinema; L.A. Independent Film Oasis; Oakland Museum; Pacific Film Archives; Canyon Cinematheque; Anthology Film Archives; San Francisco Art Institute; Annual New York Avant-Garde Festival; N.A.M.E. Gallery; Carnegie Museum of Art; Media Study/Buffalo & others. Presently lives 6 months in Yellow Springs, Ohio, teaching photography and filmmaking at Antioch College, and 6 months in San Francisco, directing EYE MUSIC Filmworks Series, Inc. Currently working in experimental film-video-photography.

ABIGAIL CHILD

Abigail Child has worked in the documentary field for several years and is now primarily absorbed in making personal films. BA Radcliff College; MFA Yale University.
Other Films: Peripeteia 16mm/col/8 minutes. 1977. Filmed in the Oregon coastal forest.

JOEL SINGER

Born November 29, 1948 in Montreal, Quebec. Reborn in San Francisco, California 1974. (MFA San Francisco Art Institute 1976)
My films have been shown in a number of group shows across the country and have been awarded prizes at various festivals. In the past year, James Broughton and I have collaborated on three films and have celebrated joint shows at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. Solo shows include Millennium, New York; Pittsburgh Filmmakers; and Rocky Mountain Film Center, Boulder.

HENRY HILLS

Henry Hills was born in Atlanta, Georgia on September 25, 1948, received his BA in English from Washington and Lee University, performed alternative service as an orderly in the emergency room of a Denver hospital, studied theology at Union Seminary in Virginia, worked as a bank clerk, a laborer, a stockboy and a wine merchant, collected unemployment, foodstamps, and student loans, and received his MFA in film from the San Francisco Art Institute. He is president and founding board member of The Foundation for Art in Cinema. His other works include *Porter Springs I*, first film, an advanced home movie; *Porter Springs 3*, a rhythmic Rorschach; *Joel*, portrait of a friend, exercise in seeing 24 frames each second, footage shot normally converted to complex single-frame rhythmic structures via optical printing; and, forthcoming shortly, *Porter Springs 4* and *North Beach.*

CAROLINE SAVAGE-LEE

Born in Ismailia, Egypt. Traveled and lived in Pakistan, England, Far East and Europe. Came of age in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Graduated from S.U.N.Y., Binghamton with BA in Art History. Ventured to San Francisco. Studied photography and received BFA from San Francisco Art Institute. Married. Joined staff of the Art Institute as Media Curator and entered graduate program in filmmaking. Also, Coordinator of *Eye Music: Filmworks Series, Inc.*

My films are explorations, investigations of the reality implied in the photo-cinematic process. I'm redefining, redirecting an awareness of the filmic space and time.
Exhibitions: San Francisco Art Institute, 1976; Eye Music, San Francisco, 1976; Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 1976; Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1977; Cinematheque, San Francisco, 1977; Los Angeles Film Oasis, 1977.

MARK MCGOWAN

Mark McGowan was born on Friday the 13th of December 1946 in San Francisco, first introduced to film in a commercial production house in Hollywood in 1965 as a editor's apprentice. Edited film in Korea (guarded pig-farms on the side); returned to study art/film in California; played harmonica in Munich; animated chickens in San Diego (received BA from San Diego State University, 1975); returned to San Francisco to reduce photographs and enlarge alphabets as a designer (received MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, 1977). Some of his other films have been shown at Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1976; Bellevue Film Festival, 1976; The Cinematheque, San Francisco, 1976,77; Brooklyn Museum , 1976; Emanuel Walter Gallery, San Francisco, 1977; Independent Film Oasis, Los Angeles, 1977.

DAVID GERSTEIN

I was born in 1951, in Cleveland, Ohio, on the first day of fall. My first cinematic experience was when Paul Sharits showed me that film was more than John Ford or Godzilla. Since then I have wandered the globe in search of the ultimate paracinematic event. My quest has taken me to the further reaches of Atlanta, Yellow Springs (Ohio), London, Chicago, and now, the golden shores of the San Francisco Bay. At one time I thought that the structural film was the answer, but I wasn't able to find anybody who could explain the term, or who could even admit to making "structural film". I have recently turned to a more concrete view of film, trying to engage the relation between the photographic, projective, and perceptual processes. Supporting myself over these years has led to a variety of jobs: warehouse person, nursery school teacher, dishwasher, secretarial assistant, substitute reading teacher, floor mopper, play therapy intern, post office worker, and clerk typist, among them. Eschewing the ideology of film degrees, film teaching and grantsmanship, I'm currently a bureaucrat for a federal government contractor.

For information regarding other works by the artists, please contact the individual filmmakers by writing c/o FILMS FROM (415), P.O Box 4100, San Francisco, CA 94101.

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